

Appl. No. 10/808,486
Amendment dated October 17, 2006
Reply to Office Action of July 17, 2006

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IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of the claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A side airbag apparatus used in a vehicle, comprising:

an airbag;

an inflator, wherein the inflator supplies gas to the airbag, thereby inflating and deploying the airbag between a body side portion of the vehicle and a seat located in the passenger compartment of the vehicle; and

a limited thickness portion, wherein, when the airbag is inflated and deployed, the limited thickness portion limits the inflation of the airbag such that the thickness of a portion of the airbag ~~corresponding to an elbow portion of an occupant on the seat~~ is less than the thickness of the remainder of the airbag with respect to the measurement between the occupant and the body side portion, and wherein the airbag includes an inflation portion that entirely surrounds the limited thickness portion and is inflated with gas from the inflator,

wherein the airbag is provided in a part of a backrest of the seat that faces the side body portion, wherein the airbag is deployed frontward in a traveling direction of the vehicle and is inflated in a space between the body side portion and an occupant for protecting at least the lumbar region and the chest of the occupant,

wherein the inflation portion includes a narrow portion, wherein, when the airbag is deployed, the narrow portion is located below the limited thickness portion and frontward in the traveling direction of the vehicle with respect to the limited thickness portion, and wherein the narrow portion is arcuate as viewed from a side of the vehicle and has a substantially constant width.

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2-4. (Canceled)

5. (Original) The side airbag apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the limited thickness portion is formed by sewing facing portions of the airbag to each other with a reinforcing fabric sheet in between.

6. (Currently Amended) The side airbag apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the limited thickness portion is one of a plurality of limited thickness portions, wherein the airbag has ~~a plurality of gas passages, and wherein each gas passage is~~ a gas passage located between an adjacent pair of the limited thickness portions.

7. (Original) The side airbag apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the limited thickness portion is circular.

8. (Original) The side airbag apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the limited thickness portion is located at a position that is outside a mainstream of gas injected by the inflator.

9. (Original) The side airbag apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the inflator injects gas in a horizontal direction.

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10. (Original) The side airbag apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the limited thickness portion is located above or below a mainstream of gas injected by the inflator.

11. (Currently Amended) A side airbag apparatus used in a vehicle, comprising:

an airbag;

an inflator, wherein the inflator supplies gas to the airbag, thereby inflating and deploying the airbag between a body side portion of the vehicle and a seat located in the passenger compartment of the vehicle; and

a limited thickness portion, wherein, when the airbag is inflated and deployed, the limited thickness portion limits the inflation of the airbag such that the thickness of a portion of the airbag ~~corresponding to an elbow portion of an occupant on the seat~~ is less than the thickness of the remainder of the airbag with respect to the measurement between the occupant and the body side portion, and wherein the airbag includes an inflation portion that entirely surrounds the limited thickness portion and is inflated with gas from the inflator, and wherein the inflation portion has a chest protecting portion for protecting the chest of an occupant, a lumbar region protecting portion for protecting the lumbar region of an occupant, and a narrow portion for, together with the limited thickness portion, protecting the elbow portion of an occupant,

wherein, when the airbag is deployed, the narrow portion is located below the limited thickness portion and frontward in the traveling direction of the vehicle with respect to the limited thickness portion, and

wherein the narrow portion is arcuate as viewed from a side of the vehicle and has a substantially constant width.

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12. (Original) The side airbag apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the airbag is provided in a part of a backrest of the seat that faces the side body portion, wherein the airbag is deployed frontward in a traveling direction of the vehicle and is inflated in a space between the body side portion and an occupant.

13-14. (Canceled)

15. (Original) The side airbag apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the airbag is provided in a part of a seat portion of the seat that faces the side body portion, and wherein the airbag is deployed upward in the passenger compartment and is inflated in a space between the body side portion and an occupant.

16. (Original) The side airbag apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the limited thickness portion is formed by sewing facing portions of the airbag to each other with a reinforcing fabric sheet in between.

17. (Currently Amended) The side airbag apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the limited thickness portion is one of a plurality of limited thickness portions, wherein the airbag has ~~a plurality of gas passages, and wherein the gas passage is~~ a gas passage located between an adjacent pair of the limited thickness portions.

18. (Original) The side airbag apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the limited thickness portion is circular.

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19. (Original) The side airbag apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the inflator injects gas in a horizontal direction, and wherein the limited thickness portion is located above or below a mainstream of gas injected by the inflator.